



# *The Insider*

[www.senate.michigan.gov/switalski](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/switalski)

## **Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10**

**July 1, 2009**

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and giving me the opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing while staying true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at [senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov) or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a location near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See the schedule below for details.

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### **Mickey's Blog: That Was the Week That Was**

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Last Thursday's session began at 10 a.m. with a full agenda of budgets to get through before the two-week recess. Added on was a deadline for an agreement on Cobo Hall. When the smoke cleared at 1:30 a.m. Friday morning, both the House and Senate had passed differing versions of almost every budget, and a conference report on Cobo had passed both chambers and was headed for the Governor.

That is really just the opening phase of the budget battle, because the two versions have to be reconciled and that will not be easy. It is clear that Michigan's revenues are vastly reduced, and the budget must reflect that. But many legislators have difficulty making the cuts in spending our new reality requires.

I drove home after adjournment, pulling into Roseville about 3 a.m., but a powerful thunderstorm had hit and knocked out the power, so my neighborhood was pitch black. Of course after 3 hours of sleep, I had to get up and hand-deliver my *Insider* newsletter.

Such is life in politics.

We remained without power for 3 days. I saved as much as I could from the freezer in iced coolers, but hurriedly grilled steaks and when the power returned cooked red beans and rice, gumbo and lots of fish.

Because there was not enough going on, we were fortunate that this was the week my mother moved in, so lots of unpacking was done by candlelight. I must say, when I called home in the late afternoon after the storm hit, it felt great to hear my mother playing her piano in the background. When the power goes out, taking the TV, the stereo, and the radio with it, it is great to have a musician in the house to provide entertainment.

Thanks, Mom.

But, let's get back to legislative business. Ironically, Monica Conyers, one of the chief critics of the original Cobo deal rejected by the Detroit City Council, pled guilty to a felony the next day and resigned. Mayor Bing had sent a letter asking legislators to support the deal, and it passed both chambers by lopsided margins.

With Conyers gone, prospects for its approval by the Detroit Council are good.

I supported the Cobo plan, which creates an authority to lease Cobo. Representatives of Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Counties, the City of Detroit, and the Governor make up the 5-member Authority Board, and the board must govern by consensus, as each has a veto. That should foster cooperation. It is the same arrangement for the SMART transit authority.

This newsletter was delayed by the power outage, which also closed my district office. So budget discussions were renewed Tuesday, and I was called to return to the Governor's office to discuss budget targets with House and Senate Appropriation leaders. After spirited discussions, we have made some progress and will continue to meet to close the gap between House and Senate versions of the budget.

Wish me luck, because we will need a lot of it. The Senate-passed versions of the budget contained significant cuts including an across-the-board reduction of \$110 per pupil in the K-12 School Aid budget, potential elimination of the Michigan Promise Grants program, the laying off of 100 Department of Human Services case workers, cuts totaling almost \$150 million in child care, before and after school and early childhood programs, and a 12 percent reduction to revenue sharing in local governments. While I will do my best to minimize the potential cuts to these critical programs and services as budget negotiations continue, these proposals are also a reflection of the harsh budget reality that the state faces.

Stay tuned for future budget updates.

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### **Mickey's Ends and Notes**

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#### **AMERICAN RED CROSS LOCAL CHAPTER'S NURSE ASSISTANT TRAINING (NAT) PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS**

The American Red Cross is one of the nation's leading health and safety training organizations offering lifesaving skills that help people prevent and respond to emergencies. The Southeastern Michigan Chapter trains almost 150,000 residents each year in these skills, highlighted by the Red Cross' Nurse Assistance Training (NAT) program. Over the past two years, the Red Cross NAT program has helped hundreds of southeast Michigan's unemployed residents obtain new jobs in the health care industry. This involves a three-week course combining classroom-delivered and on-site training at area health care facilities. Upon completion of course work, students will have acquired valuable knowledge to help them take and pass the State of Michigan certification competency test. Last year, over 1,650 tri-county residents were enrolled in the program which is currently being offered at several locations around the region, including the **Red Cross' Macomb Service Center in Warren** (located at 13260 East 11 Mile Rd. between Hoover and Schoenher Roads). To learn more about this exciting program, please visit [www.semredcross.org](http://www.semredcross.org) or contact (313) 833-4440 or toll free (877) 788-0014.

#### **HELP IS OUT THERE: STATE AND LOCAL JOB PROGRAMS FOR JOB SEEKERS**

The recent Chrysler and General Motors bankruptcies mean that more families will need job search and family assistance programs. There is a lot of help available for job seekers, but unfortunately many people don't know how to access these programs. I hope that readers will find the following information helpful. These programs are available for job seekers:

- Career Education and Workforce Programs (Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth). For job programs for veterans, people transitioning from welfare to work, specialized job placement programs, and dislocated/laid off worker assistance, visit the website at <http://www.michigan.gov/mdcd/0,1607,7-122-1679---,00.html>.
- Rapid Response Program (Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth): 1-517-373-6234. This program begins when Rapid Response is notified of a plant closing or mass lay-off, and helps people with their job search and new training they may need. Visit the website at [http://www.michigan.gov/mdcd/0,1607,7-122-1678\\_2665---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdcd/0,1607,7-122-1678_2665---,00.html).
- The Macomb County Small Business and Technology Development Center provides counseling, training, research and advocacy for new ventures, new start-up businesses, and existing small businesses. Contact them at [SBTDC@macombcountymi.gov](mailto:SBTDC@macombcountymi.gov) or by calling 1-586-469-5118.
- Unemployment Insurance Agency. To file your claim by phone, call 1-866-500-0017. To inquire about your claim, call 1-866-500-0017, and press 3. To find answers to general questions about unemployment benefits, and to print forms, log on to [www.michigan.gov/uia](http://www.michigan.gov/uia).
- Michigan Talent Bank: 1-888-253-6855. This site lists new job openings monthly and allows people to post their resume. Visit the website at: [http://www.michworks.org/mtb/user/MTB\\_EMPL.EntryMainPage](http://www.michworks.org/mtb/user/MTB_EMPL.EntryMainPage).
- The United Way of Southeastern Michigan. The United Way runs the 211 Help Line which connects people with helpful services just as 911 connects people with emergency services. Simply dial 211 (or 1-800-552-1183) and use the United Way as a link to local and state programs. 211 can make referrals to agencies that can help with job training, rent, mortgage payments, and the cost of food or prescriptions. 211 is a lifeline for people in difficult situations trying to navigate their way through local and state programs.

## **DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES ANNOUNCES NEW WEBSITE FOR CHILD SUPPORT INFORMATION**

The Michigan Department of Human Services has announced a new website for parents who pay or receive child support payments in Michigan. The website, which can be found at <http://apps.michigan.gov/MiCase/public/Home.aspx>, allows parents to log in and receive updates about their payments including information about amounts owed, payment summaries, child support case information, scheduled hearing dates, and Friend of the Court contact information.

## **STATE WARNS UNEMPLOYED WORKERS TO AVOID SCAM UNEMPLOYMENT WEBSITES**

The Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) is warning unemployed workers against using websites that charge fees to file their unemployment benefits claims. Officials also are telling workers to be wary of e-mails from websites that offer to set up direct deposit accounts for unemployment benefits. The UIA does not charge any fees to those filing claims for unemployment benefits, and it already offers direct deposit and debit cards as payment options for benefit payments.

The only website unemployed workers should use is the site that belongs to the state's Unemployment Insurance Agency at [www.michigan.gov/uia](http://www.michigan.gov/uia). The agency is aware of at least one website that is offering a pre-paid Visa card for those who have their unemployment benefit payments directly deposited onto the card. Michigan's website is fee free, and the state works closely with the well-know Chase Bank, which administers the direct deposit and debit card payment options. These filing sites show up when an individual searches for information on how to file for unemployment benefits, and charge up to \$20 to

file an individual's unemployment claim. Many of these unofficial and fraudulent sites look official and may have a ".us" domain in their web address. Using these sites can delay a person's benefits and also puts the user at risk for identity theft. Unemployed workers should never enter their personal information for unemployment benefits onto a non-state-sponsored website.

### **TOBACCO QUIT LINE AVAILABLE TO HELP**

The Michigan Tobacco Quit Line is available to Michigan residents who want to take advantage of the program to help them quit smoking and/or quit using other tobacco products. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and can be accessed via the phone number 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669). Most of the quit-lines were shutdown in March after an unprecedented number of callers flooded the lines when nicotine replacement products were offered free of charge. However, due to a lack of funding, free nicotine replacement products such as nicotine patches, gum and lozenges will not be available at this time.

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### **Coffee Hours**

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\*In response to requests from constituents, I have added coffee hours in Roseville during the daytime. Here are my next scheduled coffee hours. Please feel free to stop by or make an appointment by calling my office.

<b>July 27</b> <b>7-8 p.m.</b>  <b>Clinton-Macomb Public Library</b> (35891 South Gratiot) Clinton Township	<b>August 31</b> <b>1:30-2:30 p.m.</b>  <b>Senator Switalski's District Office</b> (31513 Gratiot, Suite B) Roseville
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### **Mickey's TV Insider Show**

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Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, and issues of concern to our district.

#### **Sterling Heights**

Every Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m.  
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

#### **Utica**

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.  
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

#### **Clinton Township**

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs  
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

#### **Roseville**

Various Times-check local listings  
(Comcast Channel 18/WOW Channel 10)

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### **Contact My Office**

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**Website:** <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/switalski>

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**Lansing Office**

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